

A CROSS OF THE PATRIARCH  
MICHAEL CERULARIUS

ROMILLY J. H. JENKINS

with

AN ART-HISTORICAL COMMENT

by

ERNST KITZINGER

FIRST the proposition; then the demonstration.

The objects illustrated in figure 1 are three fragments of a silver cross, recently acquired by Mr. John S. Thacher, and generously presented by him to the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (accession no. 64.13). Each fragment depicts a separate scene. 1. The top fragment shows the Emperor Constantine the Great (inscr. ὁ ἅγιος Κωνσταντῖνος) bowing his head in reverence before the icons of SS. Peter and Paul, which are triumphantly held up to him by Pope Silvester (inscr. ὁ ἅγιος Σίλβεστρος). 2. The left-hand fragment shows the Archangel Michael rescuing his church at Chonae (Colossae) from the flood that threatens to engulf it, while the adorant *prosmonarius* Archippus beseeches his aid (inscr. εἰχονε τον υδατο, i. e., αἱ χῶναι τῶν ὑδάτων). 3. The right-hand fragment also shows the Archangel (Michael), who appears to, and demands the obeisance of, Joshua (inscr. Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῦ Ναυί) at the siege of Jericho. Joshua is depicted twice, in attitudes first of greeting, then of *proskynesis*. Each of these pictures has a second and contemporary significance. The first demonstrates the superior authority of the spiritual over the temporal arm, of the patriarch (Michael Cerularius) over the basileus (Isaac Comnenus). The second illustrates the triumph of Michael (Cerularius) over the threatening flood of Roman heresy (1054). The third commemorates the introduction into Constantinople by Michael (Cerularius), on August 31, 1057, of the military chief Isaac Comnenus, who was crowned emperor next day (September 1). The cross was therefore made by order of the Patriarch Michael (1043–1058). The *terminus post quem* of its manufacture is September 1, 1057; the *terminus ante quem* is November 8, 1058, on which day Cerularius was seized in his monastery outside Constantinople by Isaac's Varangians, and sent into exile. The date of manufacture was probably between September 1, 1057, and the end of that year.

Such is the proposition. Before proceeding to the demonstration, it should be mentioned that a fourth fragment, acquired later, shows a Crucifixion (fig. 9). It is not probable that this fourth fragment formed part of the same cross as the other three: for, while it is identical with them in style and technique, its scale is smaller. But, however it may be, it is very pertinent to cite some remarks of the contemporary Michael Psellus on "The Miracles of the Arch-general Michael."<sup>1</sup> This tract is a rather rambling account of miracles worked in the seventh to eleventh centuries by a cross dedicated to St. Michael by the Emperor Heraclius in a church of the Virgin, apparently at Caesarea.<sup>2</sup> Speaking of the double association of such crosses with the Crucifixion and with a particular archangel, Psellus writes: "The form of the cross reminds us of Christ who was nailed to it, and is full of unspeakable grace and power. For as it had in the old days abundant worth against the assault of devils, so it still

<sup>1</sup> M. Psellus, *Scripta Minora*, ed. Kurtz-Drexel, I (Milan, 1936), pp. 120–141; the passage translated here is on pp. 124/22–125/11.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 130/20–21.

preserves its infinite grace, not only against our unseen foes, but also against every other power that may attack us. Hence, the generality of men, for whom simple faith means more than definition, dignify [such emblems] by the name of archangels, or perhaps of martyrs, thereby acquiring for themselves a double grace—that which comes from the strength of the cross itself, and that which comes from the angel or martyr recorded on the trophy. So, then, that excellent Emperor [Heraclius], in accordance with this custom, dedicated this divine and unconquerable shape to the Archangel Michael, and gave it his name; and what was seen was the Victorious Cross, and what was heard was the Archangel Michael. And it failed of neither name, or rather it acquired the power of both: for by its form it at once dismayed the barbarians, and by the divine Archangel and general it put their ranks to flight.” Our relic may well be a parallel instance.

I shall now offer some remarks on the historical importance and chronology of the cross; and then append a note of Professor Ernst Kitzinger on its art-historical aspects.

1) *The top fragment*: There is abundant evidence that the Patriarch Michael Cerularius (unique in this respect among Byzantine patriarchs) arrogated to himself a supra-imperial authority. He has for this been very justly compared with his contemporary, Pope Gregory VII.<sup>3</sup> In 1040, as is well known, he had been the head of a conspiracy to depose the Emperor Michael IV and to put himself on the throne.<sup>4</sup> After the failure of this conspiracy and the extinction of his imperial ambitions through his becoming a monk, he deliberately set out to govern the emperors themselves. His influence over the Emperor Constantine IX was from the first enormous; and we are told that this influence made him καὶ τοῦ βασιλεύοντος ὑψηλότερος.<sup>5</sup> It was only natural that such an ascendancy should lead to the highest preferment in the Church: and Cerularius was installed as patriarch on March 25, 1043. The occasion was marked by portents which manifested the divine approval and confirmation. During the service, S. Sophia's cathedral was hit by a thunderbolt which set fire to some combustibles and left a silverish ring (or rings) on the masonry: and in the ring the superstitious might discern the form of a dove!<sup>6</sup> This echo of the Baptism of Our Lord might have convinced steadier heads than Michael's of a more than mortal authority and destiny. From that time, he took his own road without reference to the crown; and it is notorious that his celebrated confrontation with the papacy in 1053–1054 was provoked by him in direct opposition to the policy and inclination of his imperial master.<sup>7</sup> He tyrannized

<sup>3</sup> A. Michel, *Humbert u. Kerullarios*, I (Paderborn, 1925), p. 39. See the more recent remarks of D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West* (Oxford, 1966), p. 57; and E. Stănescu, *Rev. des ét. sud-est européennes*, 4 (1966), pp. 52–53.

<sup>4</sup> M. Psellus, *Ἐγκωμιαστικός εἰς τὸν . . . κύρ Μιχαὴλ τὸν Κηρουλλάριον*, ed. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, IV (Paris, 1874), pp. 313–322; Cedrenus (Bonn), II, p. 530/19–22; L. Bréhier, *Le schisme oriental* (Paris, 1899), pp. 55–58.

<sup>5</sup> Psellus, *Ἐγκωμιαστικός*, p. 325: see the whole passage, ἐπεὶ δ' ἐγνώκει . . . ἀντεδόθησαν στέφανοι.

<sup>6</sup> Psellus, *Letter to Michael Cerularius*, ed. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, V (Paris, 1876), p. 511; *id.*, *Scripta Minora*, I, p. 308/17–26.

<sup>7</sup> Michel, *Humbert u. Keroullarios*, II (Paderborn, 1930), pp. 104–105 and notes.

and domineered successively over the Empress Theodora and the Emperor Michael VI, and actually deposed the latter in favour of Isaac Comnenus. His relations with the Emperor Isaac, which are especially relevant to our cross, are fully and accurately summarized by Mädler.<sup>8</sup> To illustrate his general policy between September 1057 and November 1058 it is necessary only to refer to three writings of Michael Psellus,<sup>9</sup> *passim*: especially to the Κατηγορία τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, pp. 287–289; and *ibid.*, p. 314/2–4, βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερωσύνην συνήγαγεν ἡ μὲν γὰρ χεὶρ αὐτῶ τὸν σταυρὸν ἐσχημάτιζεν, ἡ δὲ γλῶσσα βασιλικῶς ἐφηφίλετο.

Our top picture, then, is an illustration of Cerularius' claim to supremacy over the Emperor, argued from the *Constitutum Constantini*.<sup>10</sup> Several texts of capital importance prove that he claimed for his "oecumenical patriarchate"<sup>11</sup> all the privileges supposedly conferred by Constantine the Great on Pope Silvester. I shall quote two or three of these:

a. "The Patriarch [Michael], presuming on the Emperor [Isaac's] boundless favor, grew arrogant against him; and, if he wanted a favor for himself or anybody else, did not confine himself to request or advice, but, when his continuous and wearisome demands met with refusal, resorted to menace and outrageous rebuke, threatening, if the Emperor did not obey him, to "turn him off the throne," and adding the familiar and vulgar proverb "I built you, oven; I can pull you down." *He even went so far as to wear purple boots, claiming that such was the old sacerdotal practice, and that the archpriest should follow it in the new [Rome] also*: for he explained that there was little or no distinction between *sacerdotium* and *imperium*, and that, if anything, the former had the larger and more considerable share in point of honour."<sup>12</sup>

b. "The Patriarch Michael . . . wished to manage the Emperor [Isaac] himself as he saw fit, thinking that he could rely on the fact that he had assisted the Emperor to enter [the City], and presuming to conduct imperial state affairs *after the manner of the Pope of Old Rome*."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> H. Mädler, *Theodora, Michael Stratiotikos, Isaak Komnenos* (Plauen, 1894), pp. 44–47.

<sup>9</sup> The Ἐγκωμιαστικός, the Κατηγορία τοῦ ἀρχιερέως (*Scripta Minora*, I, pp. 232ff.), and the Letter to Michael Cerularius (see note 6 *supra*).

<sup>10</sup> On the *Constitutum*, see W. Ohnsorge, *Konstantinopel u. der Okzident* (Darmstadt, 1966), pp. 93–162, with exhaustive references and bibliography. Very briefly, the conclusions of interest to us are: that the kernel of CC, the *Dispositio*, was compiled in Greek by the Greek-speaking Pope Leo III in 804, and this kernel was translated into Latin and incorporated into a much longer document, including material from the *Actus Silvestri*, by the "Forger of CC" in the same year. The *Dispositio* was itself sent to Constantinople in 1054 by Pope Leo IX, to the Emperor Constantine IX in the original Greek, and to Cerularius in the Latin version. From the latter, a shortened version was re-translated into Greek, and is found in Theodore Balsamon (see Rhallis-Potlis, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, I, pp. 146–149, and note 14 *infra*). Cerularius, however, was obviously familiar with the whole CC, not just with the *Dispositio* sent to him on this occasion. The iconography of our picture (*vide infra* p. 246) pertains to that part of CC which is taken from the *Actus Silvestri*. But this creates no historical or literary problem, since the scene depicted had been known at Constantinople in a Greek literary version at least as early as the middle of the ninth century: see Georgius Monachus, ed. de Boor, II (Leipzig, 1904), pp. 485–487. For criticism of Ohnsorge's position, see H. Fuhrmann in *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 22 (1966), pp. 103–120. The origins of CC are not relevant to our study.

<sup>11</sup> See Michel, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 125–130.

<sup>12</sup> Cedrenus, II, p. 643/6ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Synopsis Chronike*, ed. Sathas, Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη, VII (Paris, 1894), p. 164/23–30.



c. "Note that in virtue of the present edict [sc. the *Constitutum Constantini*] . . . the Pope of Rome . . . wears purple boots and rides a horse with purple trappings, as the emperors do . . . Now, the Second Council awarded to the archbishop of Constantinople all the privileges of the Pope of Rome: hence some patriarchs, *such as the celebrated lord Michael Cerularius* and others [unspecified], attempted to glorify themselves with the same [reading τοῖς αὐτοῖς] privileges; but this attempt was unfortunate."<sup>14</sup>

One further detail in our picture is of literary interest. When Isaac Comnenus got into Constantinople and was crowned on September 1, 1057, he at once rewarded the Patriarch richly for his treason against Michael VI, putting in his hands the whole administration of the Constantinopolitan church, including nomination of its officials and control of its finances.<sup>15</sup> In those early days, at the end of 1057, Isaac treated Cerularius with marked deference, so that Psellus could write: πρὸ πάντων ὁ μέγιστος ἡμῶν αὐτοκράτωρ [Isaac] ὃς γε καὶ οἶα θεῖω πατρὶ προσεῖχε τούτῳ [Cerularius] τὸν νοῦν καὶ πολλάκις αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑπέκλινε καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν θεραπεύειν ἐδίδου καὶ τῶν μεγάλων ἐκείνων ὧν ἴστε πάντες ἥξιον.<sup>16</sup> Our picture shows the Emperor in just this posture before the commanding, taller figure of the Pope-patriarch, whose own head is arrogantly thrown back; and though, iconographically, the Emperor's humble gesture is in respect to the icons of SS. Peter and Paul, the eleventh-century spectator could not fail to be reminded of the salute given by Isaac to Cerularius.

2) *The left-hand fragment*: We now turn to the picture of the miracle at Chonae, which, together with the third fragment, joins the name of the Archangel (and Patriarch) Michael to our emblem. And here it is essential to note that this is not the only instance in which Cerularius took the militant Archangel for his protector and counterpart at precisely this time. A patriarchal seal of Cerularius, dated by Laurent<sup>17</sup> to 1054–1058 (or, as I believe, datable to 1057–1058), shows on the obverse S. Michael, full-face, in military dress, holding a labarum and a globe with cross; on the reverse is the inscription of Cerularius himself, and his title of "oecumenical patriarch." Now, this type of the militant archangel is very close to two notorious coin-types of the Emperor Isaac, on which he himself appears in military dress, with drawn sword or labarum: types which caused great scandal for their arrogance.<sup>18</sup> It seems most likely that the adoption of S. Michael Archistrategos was Michael Cerularius' counterblast to the Emperor. If Isaac claimed the power of the sword, yet Cerularius had at command the legions of angels who obeyed his celestial homonym.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Rhallis-Potlis, *Σύνταγμα*, I, pp. 148–149. Cerularius had no objection to the CC, provided that all the papal privileges contained in it were understood to be transferred to himself: see on this some excellent pages and notes of F. Dölger, *Byzanz u. die europäischen Staatenwelt* (Ettal, 1953), pp. 101–111. P. J. Alexander, in *Zbornik Radova Viz. Inst.*, 8 (1963), pp. 25–26, thinks that Cerularius wore the purple boots without reference to CC: our cross seems to confute this.

<sup>15</sup> Cedrenus, II, pp. 641–642.

<sup>16</sup> *Scripta Minora*, I, pp. 265–266.

<sup>17</sup> V. Laurent, *Corpus des Sceaux*, V (Paris, 1963), p. 14, no. 16 and pl. 2; cf. *ibid.*, p. xxi.

<sup>18</sup> Cedrenus, II, p. 641/3–5. In figures 4 and 5 we illustrate two specimens from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Psellus, Letter to M. C., p. 511: ἀρχιερεὺς ὑπερμαχῶν τε καὶ προμαχόμενος μόνον οὐ ξίφει καὶ δόρατι.

Isaac's offensive coinage came out immediately after his accession (αὐτικά, says Skylitzes); and Michael's patriarchal seal and cross were probably not slow in following it.

But now, as to the miracle at Chonae:<sup>20</sup> this is embodied in the Foundation Legend of the celebrated church of S. Michael at Chonae, the ancient Colossae. Here a spring of clear, fresh water (a rarity in those parts) was revealed by the Apostles Philip and John, which worked many miracles and conversions. A chapel dedicated to S. Michael was built over or near it; and some ninety years later its incumbent, or *prosmonarius*, was the pious and ascetic Archippus. In his day the "Hellenes," or pagans, determined to flood the shrine and pollute the spring (ἀγίασμα) by damming up two rivers on higher ground and then launching their brackish waters down over the sanctuary. In the nick of time, however, the Archangel Michael appeared as a fiery pillar, commanded the flood to stand still, and then, with a blow of his rod, opened a cavity or "funnel" (χώνη) in the rock, into which the waters harmlessly subsided. This is the moment depicted in our scene. The Archangel Michael, in imperial robes and carrying a globe, strikes the rock with his rod, opens the "funnel," and the flood is swallowed up. The *prosmonarius* has already fallen at his feet.<sup>21</sup>

To those familiar with the phraseology of the day, the second and contemporary significance of the picture is plain. The flood is heresy: and it is Michael (Cerularius) who rescues his church from it, as he had done three years earlier in his contest with Pope Leo IX and Cardinal Humbert. I shall give some examples of such phraseology: Anna Comnena, writing of the heresy of Nilus, says, ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ὡςπερ τι ῥεῦμα κακίας ὁ Νεῖλος ἐκεῖνος ἐπικλύζων . . . πολλοὺς ταῖς δίναις τῆς αὐτοῦ κακοδοξίας ἐβύθισεν.<sup>22</sup> Psellus' language, where he is imputing heresy to Cerularius himself, is even more appropriate to our picture, if we remember that at Chonae the impure and brackish waters of the river threatened to poison the sweetness of the wonder-working spring: εἰ δὲ καὶ ἡμᾶς χρέων ἐπέχειν τὰς ἐπιβρόδας τῶν αἰρέσεων, τὴν γένναν αὐτὴν ἀνακοπτέον ἀφ' ἧς τὸ θολερὸν καὶ ἀποτον ῥεῦμα τοῦ πονηροῦ δόγματος προελήλυθεν.<sup>23</sup> And lastly, from the same work: ἀλλ' ὁ γε δεσπότης [Cerularius] καὶ ἐπελευγμένος τὰς θύρας διέστησε καὶ ὡςπερ τι ἔρυμα καρτερόν ἀφελὼν ὁδὸν τῷ πονηρῷ ῥεύματι δέδωκε· καὶ ξύμπασα μικροῦ δεῖν ἢ τῆς ἐκκλησίας κατεκλύσθη περιοχὴ, ἔξωθέν τε ἀκατασχέτως ἐπιρρέοντων τῶν ποταμῶν καὶ πατριαρχικῆς πηγῆς ἔσωθεν τῶν διεφθαρμένων δοξῶν ἀναβλυζούσης τὰ νάματα.<sup>24</sup> This last passage, with its reference to the removal of the dam, the flooded church, the rivers without and the spring (though here corrupted) within, corresponds so closely with the elements of the Chonae legend that one cannot help wondering if in writing it, Psellus had not this legend in mind, and perhaps even our cross?

<sup>20</sup> Texts ed. by M. Bonnet, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 8 (1889), pp. 287-328; cf. *Synaxar. Cp.*, cols. 19-20. See also W. M. Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170*, 8th ed. (London, 1904), pp. 465-480.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Bonnet, *op. cit.*, p. 303: ἔπεσεν εἰς τὸ ἔδαφος ὡσεὶ νεκρός; *ibid.*, p. 315: πρηνῇ εὐθέως καταπσεῖν.

<sup>22</sup> Ed. Reifferscheid, II (Leipzig, 1884), p. 56.

<sup>23</sup> *Scripta Minora*, I, pp. 232-233.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

3) *The right-hand fragment*: This provides the *terminus post quem* for the manufacture of the cross. The ostensible subject is the appearance of the angel, identified by the Byzantines with the Archangel Michael,<sup>25</sup> to assist Joshua at the siege of Jericho.<sup>26</sup> The picture is closely related to one in the so-called "Joshua Rotulus"<sup>27</sup> from which it can be completed. The Archangel stood *with drawn sword* (ἡ ῥομφαία ἐσπασμένη ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ). When he had revealed himself as the Lord's commander (ἀρχιστράτηγος δυνάμεως κυρίου) Joshua fell at his feet, and was commanded to *take off his boots*.

After what has been said above of Cerularius' relations with the Emperor Isaac—of his assumption of the purple boots, and of his demand for the Emperor's submission—no doubt can remain as to the contemporary significance of this scene. The Archangel is once again Michael Cerularius, this time in military dress and with sword drawn, as Isaac had been represented on the first issue of his coinage. Joshua is the military chief Isaac, and Jericho is Constantinople into which the Patriarch assists him at the price of Isaac's obeisance.<sup>28</sup> Even the Archangel's command to Joshua to take off his boots fits perfectly into the story: for in the Patriarch's opinion these emblems of imperial authority belonged more fitly to the spiritual than to the secular power, and, as we know, he adopted them.<sup>29</sup> The correspondence is complete.

But the correspondence of date is no less striking. Isaac Comnenus was crowned emperor on September 1, 1057. We turn to the Synaxarion,<sup>30</sup> and we find that *on this very day*, September 1, is commemorated the decease of Joshua, and the text goes on to narrate at full his meeting with the Archangel Michael at Jericho! If this is coincidence, it is a very remarkable one. It seems to me that the incident was chosen by Cerularius because it corresponded, not merely in circumstances, but also in date, with contemporary facts as he saw them. It is also noteworthy that the Synaxarion celebrates the miracle at Chonae just five days later, on September 6.

To sum up: the cross was made by Cerularius to emphasize his supra-imperial power, his triumph over heresy, and his services and superiority to the Emperor Isaac personally. While we cannot date it positively to a shorter period than fourteen months, it seems rather more probable that it should have been made by the end of 1057, in direct challenge to the early coinage of Isaac.

<sup>25</sup> See Πρακτικά τῆς ἀρχ. ἐταιρείας τοῦ ἔτους 1964 (Athens, 1966), p. 185 and pl. 174.

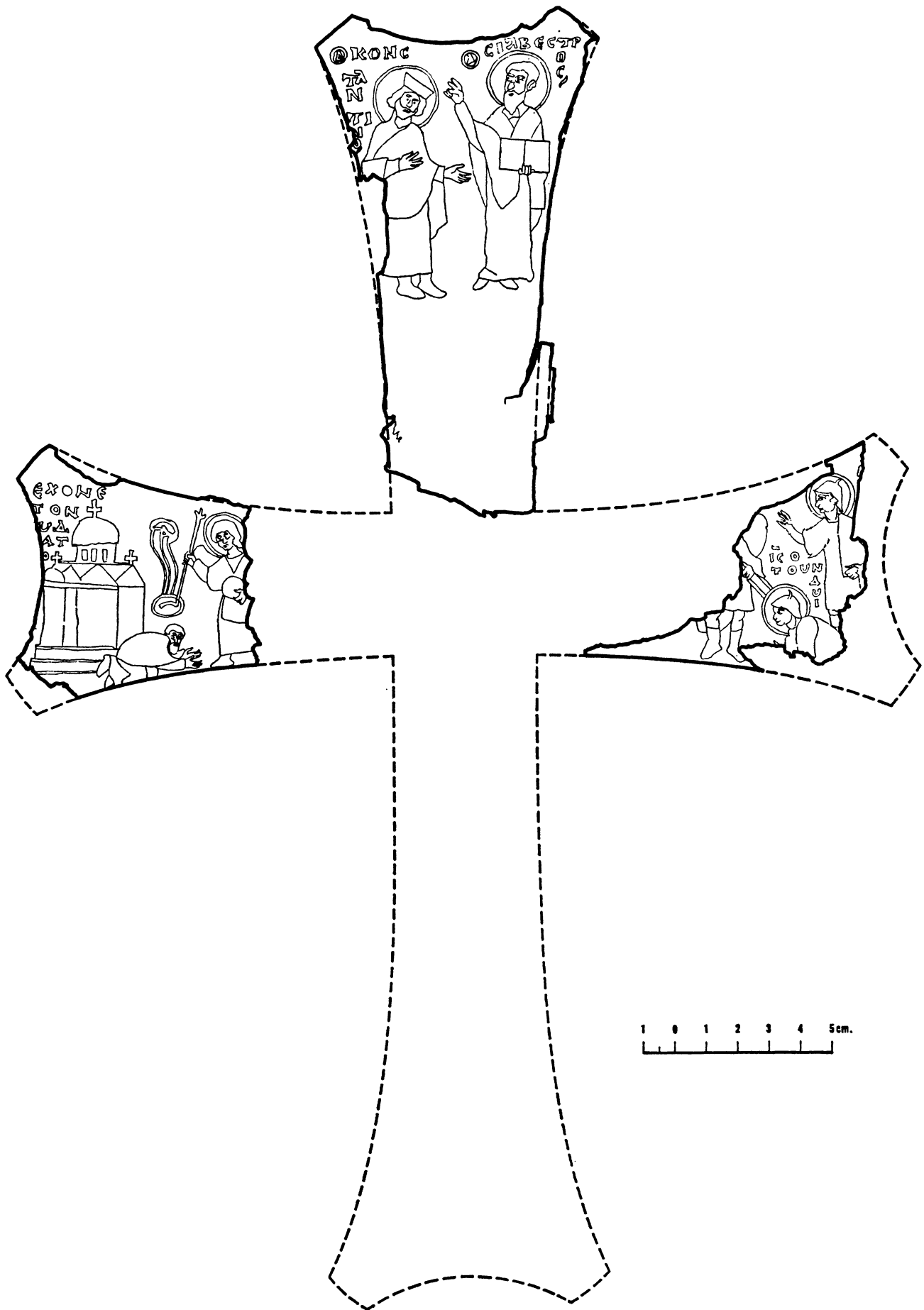
<sup>26</sup> Joshua 5:13–16.

<sup>27</sup> *Vide infra*, p. 248.

<sup>28</sup> Mädlar, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>29</sup> *Vide supra*, p. 237.

<sup>30</sup> *Synaxar. Cp.*, cols. 4–6.



The Cross of Cerularius, Reconstruction (NB. The over-all dimensions are approximate.)

# THE CROSS OF CERULARIUS: AN ART-HISTORICAL COMMENT

Ernst Kitzinger

*Dedicated to Richard Krautheimer*

THE date and meaning of the fragmentary silver cross acquired by Dumbarton Oaks in 1964 have been established beyond doubt by my friend and colleague, Professor Romilly Jenkins. It remains for the art historian to comment on the cross itself as a physical object and on the devices used by the silversmith to realize the highly meaningful iconographic program that was laid out for him.

## I. ORIGINAL SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE CROSS

The accompanying text figure, ably contributed by Mr. John Wilson, indicates with fair approximation the original appearance of the cross. Since the entire right edge of the top fragment is unbroken, the height of the top arm must have been at least 16.4 cm.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the reconstruction it has been assumed that this was its actual height. The other three arms have been proportioned accordingly, and with due regard to the fact that normally in Byzantine crosses of similar shape the lower arm is longer than the top arm, while the side arms are somewhat shorter.<sup>2</sup> The resultant shape of the cross and the scale of the scenes in relation to it seem convincing, but absolute certainty cannot be claimed for the over-all dimensions as given in the drawing.

The cross, cut from a thin sheet of silver, must have been mounted originally on a wooden core. The thickness of this core—.4 cm.—can be determined from the width of a short stretch of the fold-over preserved on the right edge of the top fragment (fig. 2). An even shorter stretch of a minute second fold-over—precariously adhering to the right edge of the first—suggests that the sheet was wrapped around the back edge of the core as well, though it seems to have extended on the back only to a width of .1 cm.

The Dumbarton Oaks Collection possesses fragments of several other crosses with arms of a similar flaring shape (if rather smaller in scale), also made of sheet silver originally mounted on wooden cores, and attributed by Mr. Marvin

<sup>1</sup> The maximum measurements of the three fragments are: Top fragment — height 16.4 cm; width 8.7 cm. Left-hand fragment — height 8.1 cm.; width 7.6 cm. Right-hand fragment — height 7 cm.; width 9.1 cm.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Mediaeval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*, I (Washington, D. C., 1962), nos. 14, 68f.; II (Washington, D. C., 1965), no. 97f.

C. Ross to dates ranging from the tenth to the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The fragment most closely comparable is an upper arm of a cross bearing an Annunciation scene in repoussé.<sup>4</sup> The fold-over, well preserved in this instance, is of the same width (.4 cm.), and here again there is evidence of a tiny second fold-over (at the right end of the upper edge). There is also, in the center of the upper edge of this fragment, what may be a small nail hole, though otherwise none of these fragments provides any clue as to the way in which the sheet silver was fastened to the core.

## 2. LAYOUT, SCOPE, AND TECHNIQUE OF DECORATION

It may well be that Cerularius' cross never comprised any decoration other than the three scenes now extant. Conceivably there could have been another figure representation on the lower arm, now completely lost. But if our reconstruction of the cross is even approximately correct only a small motif at best could have appeared in the center. The length of the top arm would have to be increased substantially at the point of intersection with the cross arms to allow for a major representation in this area such as one finds on other comparable pieces.<sup>5</sup> Nor is it likely that the reverse side of the cross bore any decoration. In view of the fold-over it seems probable that the fragments belong to the front of the cross and not to the back, and it may be doubted whether the back was encased in silver at all.<sup>6</sup>

The three extant scenes, then, may well constitute the sum-total of the decoration of the cross as originally designed. In general, crosses adorned with narrative scenes other than the Crucifixion are not common in Byzantium. The most relevant parallel known to me is the Dumbarton Oaks fragment with the Annunciation already referred to.<sup>7</sup> Cerularius' cross, however, would be unique, so far as I know, in having no representation relating directly to Christ. The point should not be pressed since the possibility of additional representations in parts of the cross now lost cannot after all be excluded. But the interesting passage from Michael Psellus quoted by Professor Jenkins

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, nos. 21–24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, no. 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, I, nos. 22–24.

<sup>6</sup> As was noted by Professor Jenkins (*supra*, p. 235), the Dumbarton Oaks Collection has since acquired another silver fragment (no. 67.7) which is part of the top arm of a cross (fig. 9). Though of the same shape and decorated in the same technique and style, it is too small in scale to have been on the other side of the same cross, and in all probability belonged to a companion piece. The maximum height of this fragment is 7.4 cm., its maximum width 7.6 cm. It must have been mounted on a much thinner core, witness the narrowness of the double fold-over, which is fully preserved on the upper edge and in small fragments on the left and right edges.

<sup>7</sup> *Supra*, note 4. Cf. also an early bronze cross in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection engraved with christological scenes (*Catalogue*, I, no. 65); a gold cross, formerly in Goluchow Castle, with an Ascension scene in niello (M. Rosenberg, *Niello bis zum Jahre 1000 nach Chr.* [Frankfurt, 1924], fig. 47A); and a fragmentary painted cross on Mount Sinai, knowledge of which I owe to Professor Kurt Weitzmann and which showed, in addition to the Crucifixion, Christ's Burial and Ascension. Crosses with scenes are perhaps more frequent outside the Byzantine sphere proper. For examples in Georgian metalwork, see G. N. Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe Chekannoe Iskustvo* (Tiflis, 1959), p. 449ff. and fig. 270ff. The enamel cross of Pope Paschal I is an outstanding and early example in the West that was to have a number of famous followers (M. Rosenberg, *Zellenschmelz*, III [Frankfurt, 1922], p. 40ff.).

would provide a perfect rationale for a dual symbolism, whereby only the shape of the cross would refer to Christ while that which is represented (or "recorded") on it carries a second and independent message.<sup>8</sup>

The cross of Cerularius is unusual also by virtue of the technique used for its figure representation. While the decoration of the other sheet-silver crosses known to me is executed in repoussé, the scenes on our cross are engraved, and an almost polychrome effect is achieved by a lavish use of gilding and niello. Most contour lines, many interior lines, and such features as eyebrows and pupils are heavily emphasized by being filled with niello. Niello is used in solid masses to "color" the dalmatic of Constantine, the paenula of Silvester, the outer garments of both figures in the Chonae scene, and the tunics and cloaks of both Joshua and the Archangel. The hair and beard of Constantine are also solidly black, while in the case of Silvester's hair and beard niello is applied to the silver ground in fine, hatched lines to achieve an effect of grayness. A similar contrast obtains in the hair and beards of Paul and Peter respectively on the double portrait which Silvester holds in his hand. The hair of the two figures in the Chonae scene, on the other hand, is again a solid black as is the kneeling Archippus' beard. All the lettering is likewise filled with niello. As for gilding, it is applied to all the haloes, to Silvester's tunic, to Constantine's loros and diadem, as well as to the cuffs of his tunic and the lower hem of his dalmatic; it greatly enhances the effect of the Chonae scene, where the building, the "flood-waters," Archippus' cuff, and the Angel's loros, wing, boot, cuff, and lower hem, as well as the globe in his left hand (and even—by mistake?—that hand itself) are all gilt; and it adds strong "coloristic" touches also to the Joshua scene where it is used for the Angel's wings, pteryges, boots, and scabbard and for Joshua's cuirass. The artist has achieved a further differentiation of surfaces by applying punched ornaments to some of the gilt passages, notably to Constantine's diadem, loros and hem, some of the "walls" of the sanctuary at Chonae, the Angel's loros and hem in that scene, and parts of Joshua's cuirass.<sup>9</sup> The use of gilding, niello and punched designs is traditional with Byzantine silversmiths,<sup>10</sup> but it is difficult to name other examples of approximately the same period in which these materials and techniques are combined in quite this way to produce pictorial effects, let alone objects that might be attributed to the same workshop or artist. Perhaps the silversmith's somewhat unusual way of selecting and combining his techniques was determined by the fact that prototypes for the scenes he was called upon to represent were available to him most readily in the form of paintings. In one case, at any rate, he was able to reproduce with a minimum of adaptation a miniature model, as we shall see.

<sup>8</sup> *Supra*. p. 235 f.

<sup>9</sup> In the artist's actual procedure—so I am informed by Mr. N. T. Chase of the Freer Gallery, who was kind enough to examine the fragments—the engraving of the scenes was first followed by the punching of the ornaments; then came the gilding, which Mr. Chase has identified as mercury gilding; and finally the niello.

<sup>10</sup> Rosenberg, *Niello bis zum Jahre 1000 nach Chr.*, p. 68 ff. See also the recent remarks by A. Frolow on "polychromy" in Byzantine metalwork ("Le médaillon byzantin de Charroux," *Cahiers archéologiques*, 16 [1966], p. 39 ff., especially p. 48 f.).

## 3. THE ICONOGRAPHIC PROTOTYPES

a. *Silvester and Constantine* (fig. 2). Clearly, this was the principal subject. By placing it in the vertical axis of the cross the artist was able to depict the figures at a larger scale than the others. The ruler of the empire standing slightly *below* the head of the church in an attitude of reverence and submission—this was the theme that to Cerularius mattered most. But it was really a misuse of a scene whose true import and meaning were quite different. The scene depicts the moment when, according to legend, Constantine first acknowledged the Christian God, by recognizing as authentic the vision of SS. Peter and Paul he had seen in a dream and the promise of recovery from leprosy they had held out to him. Having sent for Silvester, as the two Apostles had instructed him, he had asked to see their portraits to verify his dream. If, however, the artist had used as a model a literal illustration of this story the point which to Cerularius was of paramount interest would have been lost. For in the original *Actus Silvestri*, attributed by W. Levison to a Roman author of the fifth century, and in nearly all their later derivatives and adaptations both Latin and Greek, of which the *narratio* section of the *Constitutum Constantini* is the most famous, it is a deacon who, on Silvester's orders, exhibits the portraits in the imperial presence.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, a number of mediaeval representations of the scene—and there are not many—show Constantine *seated* and glancing or gesturing toward the deacon who stands before him with the picture, rather than toward Silvester.<sup>12</sup> One might suspect our artist of a wilful adaptation of this iconography, were it not for the fact that the best-known of all extant mediaeval illustrations of the Silvester

<sup>11</sup> For the *Actus Silvestri*, see W. Levison, "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvesterlegende," *Studi e testi*, 38 (1924) (= *Miscellanea Fr. Ehrle*, II), p. 159ff., especially pp. 194f., 240f.; also H. Fuhrmann, "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvesterlegende in neuer Sicht," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 15 (1959), p. 523ff., especially p. 534. For Greek translations, at least one of which must have existed as early as the sixth century, see Levison, *op. cit.*, p. 224ff. An extract in which the image episode formed the climax was contained in Pope Hadrian's letter to the Empress Irene and read at the Council of 787 (Mansi, XII, col. 1058f.). The rendering of the story in Georgius Monachus (ed. de Boor, II, p. 486) is also based directly or indirectly on the *Actus* (Levison, *op. cit.*, p. 228). So is that in the Greek *Life of Constantine* published by M. Guidi (*Accademia dei Lincei, Rendiconti*, 16 [1908], p. 304ff.; cf. Levison, p. 236f., note 3), which, however, is of particular interest in the present context because no deacon is mentioned and it is Silvester himself who exhibits the pictures (Guidi, p. 327). This text was in existence by the eleventh century (*ibid.*, p. 304).

For the *Constitutum Constantini*, see K. Zeumer in H. Brunner and K. Zeumer, *Die Konstantinische Schenkungsurkunde* (Berlin, 1888), p. 47ff., especially p. 51f.; Sch. Williams, in *Traditio*, 20 (1964), p. 448ff., especially p. 456. Ohnsorge's recent investigations (*supra*, p. 237, note 10) do not affect the *narratio* section with the image episode, of which the Latin text must still be considered the original; for the text of the Greek translation, see A. Gaudenzi, in *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano*, 39 (1919), p. 87ff., especially p. 94f.; cf. Ohnsorge, p. 99, note 26: "None of the *extant* tradition of the [complete] *Constitutum Constantini* in Greek is likely to be earlier than 1054."

<sup>12</sup> Pisa, Camposanto, relief from Church of S. Silvestro, twelfth century (W. Biehl, *Toskanische Plastik des frühen und hohen Mittelalters* [Leipzig, 1926], pl. 61a; the scene in question is in the lower zone to the left). Rome, lost fresco in the portico of Old St. Peter's, thirteenth century, known from Grimaldi's drawing (J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, I [Freiburg, 1916], p. 409 and fig. 142). Replica of this fresco in S. Piero a Grado (P. d'Achiardi, in *Atti del Congresso internazionale di scienze storiche, Roma, 1903*, VII [Rome, 1905], p. 241, fig. 36). Chartres, Cathedral, window (Y. Delaporte and E. Houvet, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres* [Chartres, 1926], p. 277 and pl. 82f.; the deacon here is in the background and holds a book rather than a picture).



story—the fresco cycle in SS. Quattro Coronati in Rome—depicts the incident in precisely the fashion in which it appears on our cross, with Silvester himself holding the double portrait and the Emperor bowing before it in reverence with arms outstretched (fig. 3).<sup>13</sup> This is not the place to investigate the textual basis and iconographic antecedents of these Roman thirteenth-century paintings. The agreement of the recognition scene with our cross suggests that this scene, at any rate, goes back to a Byzantine prototype. What matters in the present context is that there evidently was an established iconographic tradition<sup>13a</sup> which provided precisely what Cerularius wanted—a scene which, taken out of context, might be construed to show the Emperor bowing before the head of the church.<sup>14</sup> Let it be noted also that the facial features of Silvester and Constantine conform with other Byzantine representations of these Saints.<sup>15</sup>

b. *The Miracle at Chonae* (fig. 8). One would like to assume that this scene also is based on an established pictorial prototype. The subject is indeed known from a number of Byzantine miniatures<sup>16</sup> and icons;<sup>17</sup> and at least one of these representations—a miniature in the Menologium of Basil II—is sub-

<sup>13</sup> Wilpert, *op. cit.*, IV, pl. 269. G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence, 1965), col. 1027ff. and fig. 1202. The agreement does not, however, extend to every detail. Thus, the diptych held by Silvester on our cross does not show the "archaic form of icons with short busts" discussed by O. Pächt ("The 'Avignon Diptych' and Its Eastern Ancestry," *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* [New York, 1961], I, p. 402ff., especially p. 415 and note 66). The busts on the cross are of normal height, with Peter holding a key in his left hand and Paul a book.

<sup>13a</sup> After this paper had gone to press I was shown by Professor Hugo Buchthal a photograph of an unpublished miniature on fol. 25<sup>r</sup> of MS I.II.17 in the National Library at Turin, which forms part of an extensive cycle of Silvester scenes and has the same iconography, though the attitude of the standing Emperor is one of surprise rather than reverence. For this manuscript, which originated in Sicily early in the fourteenth century, see H. Buchthal in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 20 (1966), p. 103 ff.

<sup>14</sup> The *Actus Silvestri* provided a motivation for this attitude in the sense that Levison's version "B," on which the Greek translations are based—though not version "A," from which the *narratio* section of the *Constitutum Constantini* derives—has Constantine rise and greet Silvester upon the latter's arrival (Levison, *op. cit.*, p. 195). In Georgius Monachus' adaptation this becomes a "Proskynesis" (ed. de Boor, II, p. 486), and the author of the Greek *Life of Constantine* referred to *supra*, note 11, also has Constantine receive Silvester with great honor (καὶ εἰσιόντα αὐτὸν ἀναστὰς . . . ἡσπάζοντο; Guidi, *op. cit.*, p. 327). The image episode follows.

<sup>15</sup> For Silvester, see, e.g., a mosaic in Hosios Lukas (E. Diez and O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaics in Greece* [Cambridge, Mass., 1931], fig. 30) and a number of miniatures in MS Vat. gr. 752 (fols. 51<sup>r</sup>, 148<sup>r</sup>, 193<sup>r</sup>, 193<sup>v</sup>, 298<sup>v</sup>; E. T. DeWald, *The Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Septuagint*, III, 2 [Princeton-London-The Hague, 1942], pls. 21, 28, 34, 35, 42; in two other miniatures—fols. 94<sup>v</sup> and 322<sup>v</sup>, *ibid.*, pls. 24, 43—the facial type is somewhat different); the illuminator of this psalter manuscript, which is dated A.D. 1059 (*ibid.*, p. xi) and is therefore a near contemporary of our cross, gave a special and puzzling prominence to Silvester, introducing him in anachronistic and unexplained contexts. For Constantine's facial type I quote again a mosaic in Hosios Lukas (Diez and Demus, *op. cit.*, fig. 47), as well as several Cappadocian frescoes (G. de Jerphanion, *Les églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, Album II [Paris, 1928], pls. 103, 1; 133, 3 and 4).

<sup>16</sup> Rome, Vat. gr. 1613 (Menologium of Basil II), p. 17 (*Il Menologio di Basilio II* [Codices e vaticanis selecti, VIII], II [Turin, 1907], p. 17); Vat. gr. 1156 (Lectionary), fol. 266<sup>r</sup>; Barb. gr. 372 (Psalter), fol. 154<sup>v</sup>. London, Brit. Mus., MS Add. 19352 (Theodore Psalter, 1066 A.D.), fol. 125<sup>r</sup>; MS Add. 11870 (Menologium), fol. 60<sup>r</sup>. Oxford, Bodl., Gr. th. f. 1 (Miscellany), fol. 8<sup>r</sup> (O. Pächt, *Byzantine Illumination* [Oxford, 1952], fig. 24a; the figure of Archippus is here cut off below the knees, but it is standing). For miniatures for which no reference is given I have used photographs in the Princeton Index of Christian Art.

<sup>17</sup> G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinaï*, I (Athens, 1956), figs. 65, 140; II (Athens, 1958), pp. 79f., 121ff. Cf. also a Russian icon in Moscow (P. Muratoff, *L'ancienne peinture russe* [Rome-Prague, 1925], p. 55, fig. 15).

stantially earlier than Cerularius' cross. The iconography on the cross, however, differs from all other renderings of the scene known to me in showing the Angel in imperial garb, rather than in tunica and pallium; in not indicating clearly the two convergent rivers of which the flood-waters were composed;<sup>18</sup> and in depicting Archippus in a prostrate rather than erect position. The latter peculiarity may be said to be motivated by the legend itself,<sup>19</sup> though it is also possible that it constitutes an *ad hoc* departure from standard iconography, inspired by a desire to create a pendant to the prostrate Joshua in the opposite arm.<sup>20</sup> The other distinctive features, however, are not so easily explained and the possibility that the scene is based on a different iconographic tradition not at present known from other examples cannot be excluded.

c. *Joshua and the Angel* (fig. 6). With this scene we are once more on firm ground, indeed on the firmest ground possible. Our silversmith has copied, almost line for line, the corresponding scene in the Joshua Rotulus (fig. 7).<sup>21</sup> The only major changes made for our cross were in the proportions of the figures, which are more thickset; in a closing-up of the composition, whereby the prostrate Joshua overlaps the feet of the standing Joshua and the tip of the Angel's scabbard; and in a slightly more erect posture of the prostrate figure. Also, he has provided Joshua's cuirass with pteryges below the waist, like the Angel's, and, unlike the miniaturist, he has omitted the lower half of the spear held by the standing Joshua.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise the agreement is complete and extends to such minute details as the positions of Joshua's gesturing fingers.<sup>23</sup> The seemingly caricatured profile heads find their explanation in too slavish and literal an adherence to the model, whose impressionist sketchiness eluded our craftsman entirely. It is difficult to name another case in all Byzantine art of so complete a dependence of a design on a work in a different medium. Measured by this standard of literalness even the miniatures derived from the same Rotulus scene are relatively free;<sup>24</sup> and if the direct relationship to the Rotulus of the Joshua cycle in one of the Octateuch manuscripts has induced Professor Weitzmann to suggest that the former must have been accessible to artists in the imperial library of Constantinople in the thirteenth century,<sup>25</sup> our cross *a fortiori* urges upon us the same conclusion for the eleventh.

Thanks to Professor Jenkins' brilliant insight we have gained a work by a Byzantine silversmith securely dated to a period in which such chronological points of reference are particularly welcome. Unfortunately, the art historian's gain is not as great as might have been hoped because of the scarcity of objects that can readily be classed with our cross. We have just seen that some of its stylistic peculiarities are due to the copying of a particular pictorial model

<sup>18</sup> See, however, the icon in Moscow referred to in the preceding note.

<sup>19</sup> *Supra*, p. 239, note 21.

<sup>20</sup> This was suggested to me by Professor Weitzmann.

<sup>21</sup> K. Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll* (Princeton, 1948), fig. 13.

<sup>22</sup> The upper part of the spear, including its head, is depicted on the cross, though it is not clearly distinguishable in the reproduction because the silver sheet is broken along the line of the spear.

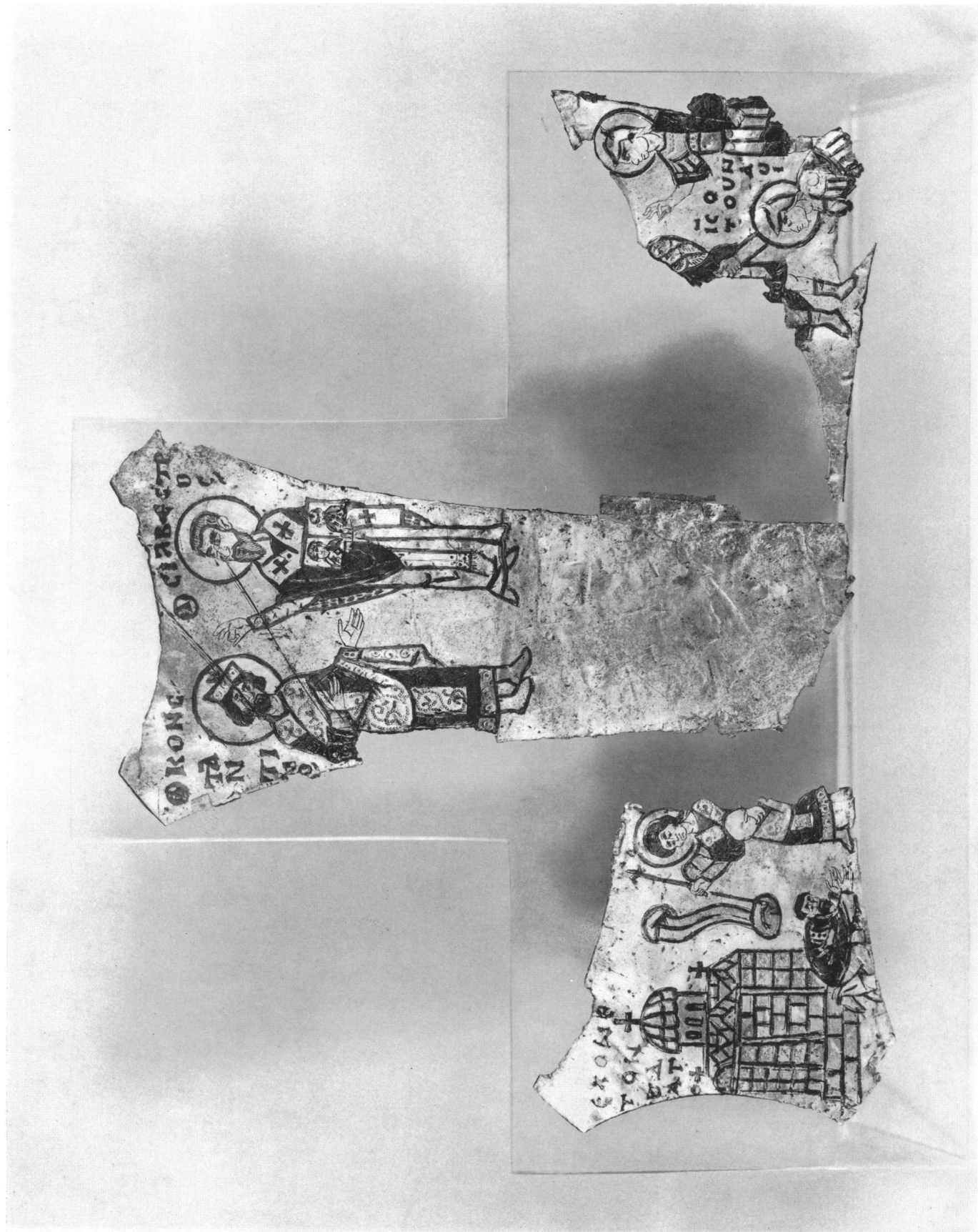
<sup>23</sup> A single upturned thumb of the prostrate Joshua is preserved at the lower edge of the fragment.

<sup>24</sup> Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, figs. 14, 15.

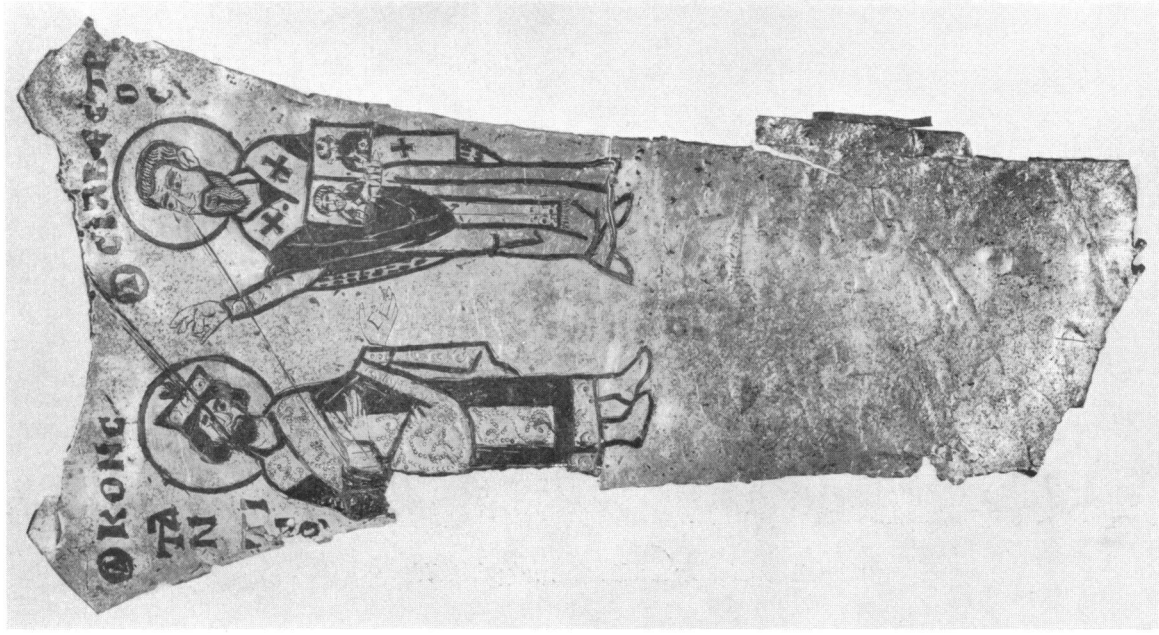
<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

which happened to be iconographically relevant; and previously I had suggested that the technique, which is also in some ways unusual, may have been employed precisely in order to facilitate the use of such models. Works that are stylistically and technically related may yet be found or may have escaped my notice. But it is also possible that Cerularius' cross was something of a *hapax* even in its time.<sup>26</sup> This in turn may have to do with the Patriarch's purposes and circumstances. The cross, after all, was less an object of devotion than an *affiche*.

<sup>26</sup> See, however, fig. 9 and *supra*, note 6, for a presumable companion piece.



1. Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Collection. The Cross of Cerularius: The Fragments as Mounted



2. Detail of Figure 1: Silvester and Constantine



3. Rome, SS. Quattro Coronati, Chapel of St. Silvester. Silvester and Constantine



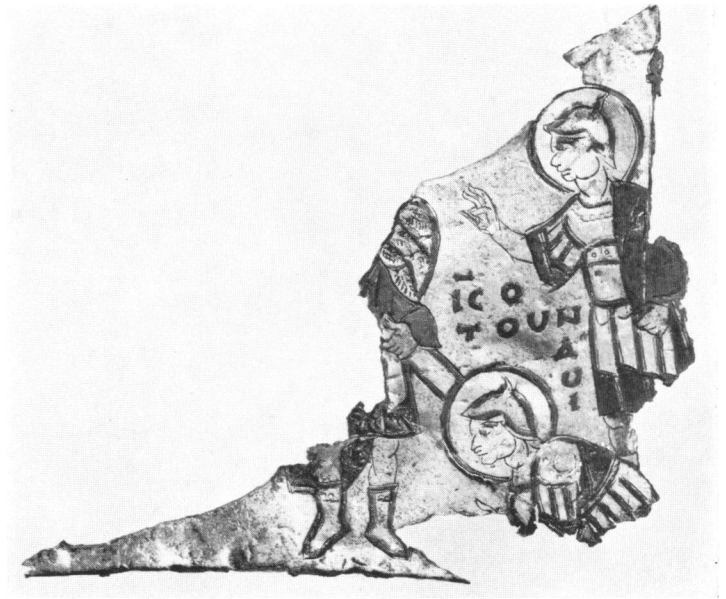


4.



5.

Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Collection.  
Coins of Emperor Isaac Comnenus



6. Detail of Figure 1: The Archangel Appears to Joshua



7. Vatican Library. MS Palat. gr. 431 (The Joshua Rotulus), Sheet IV: The Archangel Appears to Joshua



8. Detail of Figure 1: The Miracle at Chonae



9. Fragment of Silver Cross with Crucifixion

Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Collection